



**Statement by Ambassador Kristín A. Árnadóttir, Permanent Representative of Iceland.  
Concluding Meeting of the Economic and Environmental Forum, Prague 9 September  
2022.**

Thank you, Mr. Chair,  
Good morning, dear Colleagues, and distinguished guests.

My delegation aligns with the EU Statement delivered yesterday at the opening session, and today I would like to make the following additional remarks in my national capacity.

First, let me express my gratitude to hosts, organizers, speakers and colleagues that have contributed to the very important dialogue and discussion taking place in this year's Concluding Meeting, marking the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Economic and Environmental Forum. Before us now, we have a greater number of pressing issues on the economy and environment to be discussed and dealt with than ever before.

Second, I believe we leave the meeting with ideas, courage and solutions for our tool-box allowing us to individually and jointly carry on in the spirit of the OSCE, cooperation and security.

Also, let me stress some of the points made today by the representative of the National Energy Authority of Iceland, head of our team of energy transition and climate, who this morning moderated Session III on Greening the economy and the role of the energy sector.

As he stated Iceland has a story to tell on successful harnessing of sustainable energy resources, both hydro and geothermal resources. Two vital components of our energy mix are fully powered by hydro and geothermal and we are in no way dependent on Russian gas nor oil. We however, have an important challenge like most, in that we still need to transition the rest of our economy to renewables, namely transport, sea fleet and aircrafts.

Very high oil and gas prices were the main reasons Iceland embarked on the transition journey half a century ago. We couldn't afford to import oil and gas from abroad and we had the mostly untapped resources of hydro and geothermal. And harnessing these resources for heating our houses and producing electricity proved to be a giant step towards sustainability and new solutions of economic and environmental nature.

Colleagues

A mere few days after the First Preparatory Meeting last February, Russia launched its unjustified, illegal, and brutal full-scale war against Ukraine. The war has caused tremendous, unspeakable human suffering, as well as environmental and economic damage and destruction.

Russia's war against Ukraine is the most serious security threat our region has faced in decades, including within the economic and environmental dimension.

Russia's war has caused a global food crisis, where those most vulnerable are hit the hardest. Rising prices impact households and businesses, compounding with the already difficult economic situation following the pandemic. Those already in precarious situations are pushed further into poverty, food insecurity and famine, seriously impacting the enjoyment of their human rights.

The war has also caused an energy crisis throughout the region, a stark reminder of how urgent it is to act on energy security and develop a comprehensive strategy to transition to clean, renewable resources, and lessen dependence on Russian oil and gas. States in our OSCE area – and in fact the whole world – are faced with the same situation Iceland experienced in the nineteen seventies.

During a time where the OSCE region and the world has moved from urgency to an emergency regarding climate change, Russia's illegal and unjustified war and by weaponizing its gas resources, has forced a redirection of efforts and resources that could be focused on addressing the existential question of climate change and indeed, strengthening cooperation to sustainably recover from the pandemic.

We need multifaceted approaches and solutions, and it has been inspiring to listen to our thinkers and experts here at this important forum. We need a clear vision and strong focus on how to build back better and greener.

Iceland's green energy system and reliance on geothermal heating protects Iceland's population from energy insecurity such as that which is facing the OSCE region. Every nation has this potential, in support of long-term energy security. Iceland stands ready to share its experience and cooperate at all levels needed to facilitate and support the prioritization of green energy solutions and achieve climate resilience within the OSCE region.

Mr Chair

Climate change is one of the greatest threats to the lives and livelihoods of the generations of today and tomorrow, increasingly impacting our everyday life, environment, and societies. The pollution and environmental damage caused by Russia's war will have devastating long-term consequences within and beyond Ukraine.

(We continue to strongly condemn Russia's military aggression during its war of choice against Ukraine. It is truly tragic that an OSCE participating State has disregarded, undermined, and violated our common OSCE commitments, international law, and the UN Charter).

I thank you.